

Sūrah 89

Al-Fajr (The Dawn)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The opening word, *al-Fajr* (the dawn) constitutes this *Sūrah*'s title.

Period of Revelation

In the light of its contents it emerges that this *Sūrah* was revealed at a time when the persecution of Muslims was well under way. Little wonder then that their persecutors – the Makkan unbelievers – are asked to take a lesson from the horrible end of earlier persecutors, such as the 'Ād, Pharaoh and the Thamūd.

Subject Matter and Themes

The *Sūrah* affirms emphatically the divine recompense that awaits all in the Hereafter, and which was rejected by the unbelieving Makkans. The following arguments are presented in order to bring these themes home:

First, an oath is taken with reference to the dawn, the ten nights, the even and the odd and the departing night in order to persuade the unbelievers that their rejection of the truth does not hold any water. These four phenomena, as explained in the following notes, underscore the regularity and constancy in the present order. While reflecting on this divine dispensation, marked by sagacity, man should not have any difficulty in realizing that Allah, Who has put in place this order, may cause the Hereafter. His wisdom demands that man be recompensed for his deeds.

Next, attention is drawn to history and the terrible fate of the 'Ād, Thamūd and Pharaoh, cited here as instances of transgression that courted inevitable punishment. This proves that the present order is not at the mercy of some blind, unthinking forces. Nor is chaos or degeneration tolerated. As the universe is under the control of the Almighty, All-Wise Allah, He has devised an elaborate scheme, one that rests on the planks of wisdom and justice. He has invested man with reason and moral sense and granted him authority in certain measure. Accordingly, He will call man to account and recompense him.

Some profound observations are made regarding human society. The Arabs of the day were in the shackles of *Jāhilīyah*. Two aspects of that society are condemned in particular: (1) Their materialistic outlook on life, as result of which they disregarded morals and set their eyes only on worldly gain and glory. They failed to realize that affluence is not a divine reward nor is poverty a sign of his punishment. Actually, Allah puts man to the test in both states of poverty and wealth. It is ascertained how man acts in adversity and prosperity. (2) Their detestable attitude towards orphans. Orphaned children used to suffer terribly and no redress was available to them or to the poor. Usurping orphans' and the weak's belongings and inheritance was rampant. Indeed, the Arabs' love of riches was insatiable. This criticism reinforces the need for divine recompense in the Hereafter.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of divine reckoning is emphasized. Allah will sit in judgement. Only then will the unbelievers see the truth that they presently deny. They will then regret their disbelief, yet it will be of no avail for all is now too

AL-FAJR (The Dawn)

late. However, those who sincerely accept the truth in this life, as presented by Allah's Scriptures and Messengers, will be blessed with Allah's pleasure. They will be reckoned in the Hereafter as His righteous servants and will enter Paradise.